

Posterior vitreous detachment

Information for patients

What is a posterior vitreous detachment?

The vitreous is a transparent gel substance filling the back of the eye ball. With age the vitreous gel shrinks back and separates itself from part of the retina at the back of the eye.

What are the signs and symptoms?

You may notice black 'floaters' in your vision (sight) which move with your eye and then settle as your eye rests. You may also be aware of flashing lights, like little flickers on the outside of your vision. To look at, your eye appears normal.

What is the treatment?

There is no treatment needed for posterior vitreous detachment. The floaters are annoying but not serious. Although they do not usually go away, your brain learns to compensate for them so that they become less noticeable.

Until that happens, you can move them temporarily from your line of vision by moving your eyes from side to side and up and down. This creates a current within the vitreous gel that often pushes the floaters to the periphery (edges) of your vision.

The flashing lights should slowly settle over the next few days or weeks.



Retinal tear and retinal detachment

Less than one in 10 patients having a posterior vitreous detachment may suffer from a retinal tear in the future. This may progress to a retinal detachment which may need urgent surgery or laser treatment.

What are the possible warning signs of a retinal detachment?

You should be aware of the signs and symptoms of a retinal detachment. Contact your GP, optician, or Emergency Department as soon as possible if any of the following occur.

- A sudden increase in the number of floaters in your vision.
- New floaters.
- The flashing lights get worse or increase.
- Part of your visual field is missing.
- A 'curtain' coming across your vision.

Further information

For more information on retinal detachments, please read the **Retinal detachment** leaflet on the Trust's web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/eye-patient-leaflets

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation

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